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**One Hundred Sixteenth Congress**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Foreign Affairs**  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
[www.foreignaffairs.house.gov](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov)

May 15, 2019

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C., 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are deeply concerned by your failure, more than two years into your term, to name and have confirmed an Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs at the Department of State. The absence of a confirmed official to lead the Department's efforts at advancing some of American's most important relationships, including with India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, has had a demonstrably negative impact on U.S. interests and regional stability in South Asia.

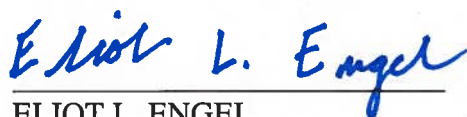
The State Department's lack of senior-level involvement on a variety of matters related to South Asia has been deeply disturbing. From the failure of the Department's senior officials to engage directly with Sri Lankan government officials during the country's October-December 2018 constitutional crisis, to the Department's failure to form a coherent India policy, to the mishandling of the U.S.-Afghanistan relationship in the midst of seeking a peace deal with the Taliban, it is clear that American leadership -- when it is needed most -- is missing in action. We believe that these failures are at least in part the result of not having a confirmed Assistant Secretary.

We laud the performance of acting officials and career personnel at the State Department who have covered South Asia while there has been no Senate-approved leadership of the Bureau. However, while acceptable for relatively brief periods of time, having no Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian more than two years into your term is not acceptable.

The President  
May 15, 2019  
Page Two

We understand that candidates with deep South Asia experience in and outside of the State Department have been considered for the Assistant Secretary position, so it is difficult to understand why it remains unfilled. We strongly urge you to nominate a qualified individual to fill this critical Assistant Secretary position as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL  
Chairman  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



DINA TITUS  
Member  
House Subcommittee on Asia, the  
Pacific, and Nonproliferation



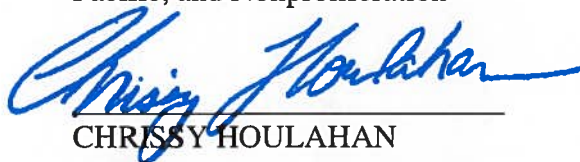
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ANDY LEVIN  
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Member  
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The President  
May 15, 2019  
Page Three

CC: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo